



tadpole madtom

Noturus gyrinus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Osteichthyes
Family: Cypriniformes
Order: Ictaluridae

Features

The tadpole madtom is a small catfish, rarely exceeding three or four inches long. It has the characteristic eight barbels (whisker-like projections) around the mouth, spines in the pectoral and dorsal fins, and adipose (fat) fin in front of the tail fin. It also lacks scales. It varies in color from dark olive or brown to dark gray with a lighter underside. There is a conspicuous, very narrow dark line along the side of the body. The body is short and stout and the head is large and fleshy, not flattened. The upper and lower jaws are of equal length. As with other madtoms, there is a poison gland at the base of the pectoral fin that causes a burning sensation if you are pricked with the fin.

Natural History

The tadpole madtom is widely distributed in large interior rivers and the Mississippi River. It also is found in oxbow lakes of the Missouri River and occasionally in natural or constructed lakes. It eats

insects and occasionally algae or aquatic plants. The tadpole madtom is active at night. Females mate several times during June through July. Most mature during their second summer. Few live beyond their third summer.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

eastern two-thirds of Iowa; oxbows of the Missouri River

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.